Hazardous Waste
Tips for Avoiding Problems

Message from Mike Wisherop, 16 September 2016

Due to the extensive use of chemicals, many MSD workers generate hazardous waste, which needs to be disposed of properly. If you generate this type of waste, you should remember taking training classes on how to properly collect and store waste while it is awaiting pickup (EHS0604 and refreshers). MSD supplements these with our own MSD0015 training to emphasize MSD specific concerns. Even with all this training and retraining, there are still mistakes and potential risks for injury, spills or environmental release.

Listed below are the most serious observed issues in MSD waste accumulation areas due to either high frequency or severity of consequence, as well as what needs to be done to avoid problems.

- **Waste/chemicals reacting in the accumulation or storage areas** – Properly store chemicals and waste that might react with air, moisture or at a particular temperature. Reactions may occur in containers, which are not tightly closed. If you are unsure about a chemical's reactivity, read the SDS.
- **Inaccurate or illegible accumulation logs and waste labels** – Write clearly and check spelling. Look at the original container label to verify spelling.
- **Waste accumulated in a single container beyond time limits** – Pay attention to accumulation start dates. Make sure that waste is properly disposed of within six months.
- **Overfilled liquid waste containers** – In flamcans do not fill above the imprinted line or above the inner filter screen. In other containers leave and air gap one to two centimeters below the neck.
- **Incompatible waste stored too close together** – Separate incompatibles in their own secondary containment trays. Distance then within SAAs to avoid inadvertent mixing. Consider establishing separate SAAs in labs where there is heavy use of incompatible chemicals.
- **Waste outside of the accumulation area and non-waste in accumulation areas** – Communicate with lab personnel to reinforce where waste belongs within the lab. Periodically inspect chemical storage and SAAs.
- **Open waste containers in accumulation areas** – Only open containers when adding waste. Close the containers immediately after waste has been added. Periodically inspect SAAs to ensure containers are tightly closed.
- Us**ing the wrong type of waste container -** Accumulate liquid corrosive wastes in polyethylene or plastic containers that are known to be compatible with acids or bases. Use listed and approved safety cans for flammable or ignitable waste. A glass container is permissible for small amounts of flammable waste, but the maximum allowable glass-container size is 1 pint for Class IA liquids, and 1 quart for Class IB liquids

For more information contact your EH&S Technician, or review MSD0015 or the EHS guidance on hazardous waste.

Thank you,

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